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# Popularity of on-line video increases

## DIGITAL SURVIVOR

JIM CARROLL

The idea of convergence, the marriage of new and old forms of broadcasting, is becoming real in one area — on-line video. We are seeing a furious pace of development, in technology and the number of people who have the high-speed connectivity that permits on-line viewing.

Learning how to add video to the Web might be a useful career skill, regardless of who you are and what you do. Imagine, for example, you have an on-line résumé. Why not spice it up with a little bit of video featuring you? Or consider on-line training — with massive growth expected in this field, video will be a key component.

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The fact is, more people have high-speed connections they can use to view on-line video. I've proved this with my own Web site by using the Buystream Architect analysis service for the Web from Ottawa-based Buystream.com. **(www.buystream.com)**.

Among other things, it examines the speed of the connection of visitors to my site, and tells me if they have the necessary video viewing software installed within their Web browsers.

In fact, of the site's visitors during March and April, one in every four had a connection fast enough to view video. Not only that, but 88 per cent of all visitors had the Microsoft video player installed and 47 per cent had RealPlayer installed, meaning that few people would struggle to figure out how to view video.

The process of adding video to a Web site is becoming more straightforward every day, as we see a significant maturation in hardware and software to support such an undertaking.

In my case, I have a mixture of stuff that lets me get video over to my site. First, I do my filming with a Sony digital video camera. The fact that it is digital means that when it is recording, it is saving video to a "big computer file" on tape.

Chunks of that video file are then transferred to my PC using a Firewire connection, with absolutely no loss of quality.

Once the video is in my PC, I then use a video editor, Ulead's MediaStudio Pro 6.0 **(www.ulead.com)**. It's an extremely sophisticated and powerful program that allows me to create a finished production by stitching and editing together various scenes, adding special effects, incorporating titles and background music and countless other features.

There are plenty of video editing programs such as this, ranging from the basic kind designed for the novice, to extremely high-end software used by Hollywood pros.

Finally, there's the process of preparing your video in a format suitable for the Web. In a nutshell, you want to make video available in Apple's QuickTime, RealNetworks.com's RealVideo, or Microsoft's ASF formats. You might even consider making it available in a combination of these formats, recognizing that different people prefer different video programs.

While your video editing program might allow you to prepare these files for you, consider using a tool such as Terran's Media Cleaner Pro **(www.terran.com)** if you are serious. It's the weapon of choice used by professionals when preparing quality video, whether for the Web, CD-ROM or DVD, simply because it allows you to try a whole bunch of different settings related to compression, video size, sound quality and other factors when creating the video.

That's important, because you've got to make a video that is small enough, yet retains enough quality, to be viewed on-line.

The emergence of broadband, simple but powerful video editing programs, plus the Web, is leading to a situation where everyone is set to become his own video producer, establishing his own on-line TV station.

In fact, it might be time to update that song to use the phrase, "500 million channels and nothing's on."

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*Jim Carroll is co-author of* Light Bulbs to Yottabits: How to Profit by Understanding the Internet of the Future, *and can be reached by e-mail at jcarroll@jimcarroll.com*